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## **E. COLI OUTBREAK UPDATE MILWAUKEE COUNTY AND STATE OF WISCONSIN**

City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) Commissioner Bevan K Baker, CHE gave an update today on the current multi-state E. coli O157:H7 outbreak. As of 1:00 p.m. today there are nine states, including Wisconsin, reporting over 50 cases of infection. Of these 50 cases, 30 have been confirmed in nine Wisconsin counties, including five in Milwaukee County. One death has been confirmed in Wisconsin.

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to determine the exact cause and scope of the outbreak. At this time, preliminary epidemiologic evidence suggests that bagged fresh spinach may be a possible cause of the outbreak. No specific lot or brand of product has been identified at this time.

Based on this information, the FDA advises consumers not to eat bagged fresh spinach. Today, the Wisconsin Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends that consumers should throw out all bagged fresh spinach. The Milwaukee Health Department agrees that citizens should avoid eating bagged fresh spinach. In addition, DPH is recommending that grocers pull all such products off their shelves until further notice. The MHD continues to work closely with the state's Department of Public Health to enhance surveillance, identify additional cases, and conduct appropriate follow-up.

E. coli O157:H7 bacterial infection causes diarrhea that is often bloody accompanied by abdominal cramps with fever mild or absent. The illness typically resolves in one week; however young children and the elderly can develop Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), a type of kidney failure that requires hospitalization.

Of the 30 cases in Wisconsin, 17 people have been hospitalized, 4 have been diagnosed with HUS, and one patient has died. Persons who have consumed fresh bagged spinach and experience illness should seek medical care from their healthcare provider.

Other states that have reported E.coli cases include Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

**MORE**

Citizens can help prevent E. coli infection by:

- Washing all fruits and vegetables thoroughly
- Cooking all meats, especially ground beef and hamburger, thoroughly
- Drinking only pasteurized milk, juice and cider
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water before and after food preparation, between handling raw meats and ready-to-eat foods, and after using the toilet.

Further information on the outbreak will be provided as information becomes available through the FDA, CDC and Wisconsin DPH. Information will be posted on the MHD website at [www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health).

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